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General Assembly
Fiftieth Session

Official Records

113th plenary meeting
Tuesday, 23 April 1996, 3 p.m.
New York

President: Mr. Freitas do Amaral . . . . . (Portugal)

The meeting was called to order at 4 p.m.

Agenda item 120 (*continued*)

Scale of assessments for the apportionment of the expenses of the United Nations (A/50/888/Add.5)

The President: In a letter contained in document A/50/888/Add.5, the Secretary-General informs me that, since the issuance of his communications dated 28 February, 6 March and 3, 11 and 16 April 1996, Honduras has made the necessary payment to reduce its arrears below the amount specified in Article 19 of the Charter.

May I take it that the General Assembly duly takes note of this information?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 8 (*continued*)

Adoption of the agenda and organization of work

Request for the reopening of agenda item 44 (The situation in the Middle East)

Letter from Colombia addressed to the President of the General Assembly (A/50/940)

The President: Document A/50/940 contains a letter dated 19 April 1996 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Colombia to the United Nations addressed to me.

In his letter, the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Colombia to the United Nations, in his capacity as Chairman of the Coordinating Bureau of the Non-Aligned Movement, transmits to me the decision adopted by the Movement at a meeting of the Coordinating Bureau on 19 April 1996, requesting that a resumed session of the fiftieth session of the General Assembly be convened under agenda item 44 (The situation in the Middle East).

In order for the General Assembly to consider this matter, it will be necessary to reopen consideration of agenda item 44, entitled "The situation in the Middle East".

May I take it that the General Assembly wishes to reopen consideration of agenda item 44?

It was so decided.

The President: May I further take it that the Assembly agrees to proceed immediately to the consideration of agenda item 44?

I see no objection. We will then proceed accordingly.

96-85538 (E)

This record contains the original text of speeches delivered in English and interpretations of speeches delivered in the other languages. Corrections should be submitted to original speeches only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and be sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned, *within one month of the date of the meeting*, to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, Room C-178. Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.

Agenda item 44 (*continued*)

The situation in the Middle East

The President: The Assembly will first hear an address by the President of the Lebanese Republic, His Excellency Mr. Elias Hraoui.

Mr. Elias Hraoui, President of the Lebanese Republic, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations the President of the Lebanese Republic, His Excellency Mr. Elias Hraoui, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Hraoui (*interpretation from Arabic*): Lebanon thanks the United Nations for responding positively to its request to convene this meeting. We greatly appreciate the convening of the General Assembly at this urgent meeting to discuss the exacerbation of the Israeli acts of aggression against Lebanon. The Assembly is shouldering its responsibility towards a country that is being undeservedly penalized.

Allow us to express to you, Sir, and to the Secretary-General our gratitude for the services the United Nations has rendered to humanity in upholding the principles of international legitimacy and for its distinguished role in promoting international solidarity, despite difficult circumstances.

Lebanon has overcome the senseless ordeals imposed on it for over 17 years. We started to rebuild our shattered homeland so that it would become what it once was — a beacon for freedom, democracy, progress and peace. Security has prevailed, and the Lebanese army and legitimate security forces have been deployed in the capital and in other areas. They were about to be deployed to our courageous south so that they could undertake with the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL), which we thank for its sacrifices, the task of consolidating our national sovereignty. The State started revitalizing its institutions and agencies and embarked on enforcing the law and redressing the consequences of the war at the national, economic, social, educational and environmental levels. We launched a successful campaign to combat the spread and cultivation of illegal drugs. Lebanon has won worldwide admiration for its achievements in this field.

We came to the Assembly in 1991. We appealed to it from this very rostrum: "Give us back our usurped rights." We called upon it to cooperate after we had successfully implemented the national reconciliation agreement that was accepted by consensus by the Lebanese in Al-Taif in 1989. This was a document that won Arab and international support, in particular the support of the permanent members of the Security Council.

We called upon the Assembly to cooperate with us in implementing Security Council resolution 425 (1978), referred to in the Al-Taif Agreement, which in turn calls for the spread of the State's authority to the south and the Western Bekaa through its own forces. It was the same resolution that mandated in 1978 the deployment of UNIFIL to guarantee the withdrawal of the Israeli forces to our internationally recognized boundaries.

But Israel was troubled to see Lebanon rise from destruction, start its march on the road to economic recovery and prepare to regain its sovereignty over the Lebanese territories Israel occupies in the south and the Western Bekaa. Israel started to attack Lebanon daily. Then it invaded the south in 1993 and forced Lebanon into a hell of destruction and bloodshed.

We expected the world to help us develop our reconstruction capabilities. Instead, we come to the Assembly today bearing the blood of our innocent people and bearing witness to our hopes and faith that were shattered by Israel: that is, our faith in international legitimacy to recover our rights.

We represent the dignity of a wounded nation whose only sin was that it did not believe in violence and force as a means to deter aggression.

Lebanon was, and will remain, a source of cultural inspiration, a bridge between East and West. Its capital was a learning centre, a resort, a Mecca of sorts for businessmen and tourists from all parts of the world paying homage to its magnificent archaeological, architectural and natural masterpieces.

The Lebanese are missionaries of peace and progress, whether in their country or in Europe, the Americas, Asia, Africa or Australia. Their achievements bear witness to this. They are known to respect fully the laws of the country in which they live. They contribute to its progress and they distinguish themselves in the fields of medicine, engineering, law, the arts, sciences and literature. Many of them occupy prominent positions in the countries represented here.

What logic could Israel use to justify burning our homeland and killing our people?

How could Israel be allowed to destroy the achievements that took us six years to realize?

How can anyone justify the violation of our peaceful country? Our airspace is violated daily by Israeli fighter jets, and our territorial waters are violated daily by Israeli naval ships that blockade commercial ships entering our ports.

How could the world accept the killing of Lebanese civilians and the displacement, oppression and humiliation of scores of them while the same world hastens, at Sharm El Sheikh, to denounce the explosion of a bus inside Israel?

How could the Israeli people, who were once the victims of Auschwitz, Treblinka and other places, accept that its State massacred more than a hundred men, women and children — all innocent civilians — in Qana, which was once visited by Christ and which was a scene for his miracles? Those innocent civilians took refuge in the UNIFIL base, fleeing the bombardments and the killings. They thought they would be protected under the umbrella of immunity, of international legitimacy.

How could the Israeli people concur with its State's crime of genocide in Nabatiye and many other villages whose people had only their patience and their belief in God and in Lebanon for weapons?

What does the Assembly want Lebanon to become? Does it want it to be the site of mass graves for the world to visit? Would Lebanon say to this world "This is what you did with your own hands? Weren't the mass graves of Jews a testimony to the crimes committed by the Nazis 60 years ago?"

Should Lebanon be continuously violated?

How could Israel destroy the infrastructure and vital foundations of a society? Israel has targeted power plants, destroyed roads and hospitals, demolished homes and villages and forcefully displaced many Lebanese. It bombarded archaeological sites that were classified by the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) as part of the international heritage of mankind. It blockaded roads between the villages of the south and the rest of the homeland and obstructed the delivery of food and medical assistance to the needy and the wounded. The south was turned into a wasteland.

Why commit the most heinous crimes against a country which has always been an advocate for peace, a just peace?

We would have wanted the Assembly to talk about Lebanon as a political, economic and cultural haven in the Middle East. Does Israel want peace with our country? Is it forbidden that our country rise from its ashes? By what logic are we deprived of the right to uphold our sovereignty and our territorial integrity while Israel has the right to acquire nuclear weapons and refuses to sign the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT)? Does Israel want Lebanon to choose between the total destruction of its infrastructure, an undermining of its capabilities and its sovereignty, or surrendering completely to its occupation by giving up its right to live in dignity on it soil?

Despite the Israeli shelling, the Lebanese remain united and stand together defending their homeland and their right to sovereignty. International support was a further incentive to our steadfastness.

We participated in the Madrid conference on the basis of the implementation of international resolutions, foremost among which is Security Council resolution 425 (1978). Our participation was based on the letters of guarantee given by the American Administration to implement that resolution. We entered the Madrid conference in solidarity with our Arab brethren, on the basis of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) and on the principle of land for peace. We were guided by Lebanon's commitment to facilitate any international effort for the realization of a comprehensive, just and permanent peace in the Middle East.

Lebanon and Israel held more than 10 rounds of negotiations without realizing any positive progress. Israel overburdened the negotiations with its manoeuvres and by asking for the impossible.

How can it be accepted that this Organization enforces Security Council resolutions in the Middle East against a country that challenged international will, while the international resolution in favour of Lebanon, a country which has never been an aggressor, remains unimplemented? Israel, it must be recalled, has persistently challenged this resolution ever since 1978 by

its continued occupation of cherished parts of our land and by its continued aggression.

We did not come to the highest authority representing the conscience of mankind, and to the General Assembly, which is entrusted with the implementation of international legitimacy and respect for human rights, merely to speak and have our words go unheeded. We did not come to the United Nations to cry or to lament. We came here in the hope that we shall all stand firmly and decisively together against aggression and transgression, against the heinous crimes that go unpunished. Israeli aggression against Lebanon is proof that the international legitimacy about which the civilized, free world brags has failed to put an end to war and transgression.

Lebanon is a founding Member of the United Nations. It is also a founding member of the League of Arab States. Lebanon participated in drafting the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. In these organizations and in all other international forums, Lebanon has persistently been an advocate for the liberation of peoples and for the principles of democracy and peace. Lebanon is for a comprehensive and just peace. We in Lebanon are against gunboat peace. The Israeli crimes will not force us to give up our rights. Israel will not make us renege on our commitment to a just and comprehensive peace. Do these Israeli practices represent an Israeli call for peace? Is this the way we educate younger generations about the principle of peace?

Lebanon is calling for the following:

First, that Israel be condemned/and punished for the crimes committed against the Lebanese, their institutions and sovereignty, and against humanity. I should recall that, in addition to the number of martyrs killed among the ranks of the Lebanese army and security forces, the number of civilians killed totals 175, 109 of whom were killed in the Qana massacre. There were more that a thousand injuries, and more than 400 people are still being treated in hospitals. The number of those forcibly displaced from their land and homes has reached 500,000.

Secondly, the implementation, forthwith, of resolution 425 (1978), which calls for the withdrawal of Israel from the territories that it occupies in the south and western Bekaa valley to the internationally recognized boundaries. I will repeat what I said from this rostrum in 1991. Our security forces will immediately assume responsibility for security in that area. We have repeatedly declared that as soon as Israel withdraws the Lebanese State will guarantee security in this region.

Thirdly, redress for Lebanon for the losses resulting from the damage sustained due to Israeli aggression. Allow me to demand justice. Ad hoc committees have been established for the preliminary evaluation of the damage, which is thought to exceed hundreds of millions of dollars.

We would be remiss if we failed to express from this rostrum our appreciation to our friends and brothers for their sympathy and support during the ordeal that my country has suffered as a result of the Israeli actions.

For over 17 years, Lebanon has paid the price for other peoples' wars fought on our land. What logic can force Lebanon to pay the price for a peace sought by others?

This Organization is being put to the test. Our wounded people look up to it, as do history and the future. This is a test of international credibility: whether to defend the will of international peace or succumb to the whims of aggression. This is a test for the conscience of our era. Humanity can either step into the twenty-first century more confident of the role of international legitimacy, or it can slip into an era of impunity and barbarism, which would be regrettable. May God help us to avoid such a catastroph .

Lebanon looks forw to a responsible political era in which all cooperate to ...mote human progress on the basis of justice and respect for the rights of others to prosper in security, and on the basis of an enhanced confidence in the role of the United Nations in promoting international stability.

Innocent civilians are being killed in Lebanon. They beseech representatives in every corner of this Organization; their outcry should awaken the conscience of peace- and justice-loving States. Where is the right? How banal are the political attempts to outwit, when what is at stake is a homeland, destroyed and a people suppressed by injustice and aggression? Let politics raise itself to a level worthy of man.

I left Lebanon as the bells of the churches were ringing in mourning and the minarets of mosques, draped in black, called people to prayers. I arrived in New York, where the United Nations from its Headquarters defends the rights of peoples, particularly those of small

States. I arrived in New York and saw the Statue of Liberty in the harbour. My country, like this Statue, beseeches the Assembly to restore our usurped rights.

In the face of the logic of force, we shall for ever raise the banner of right.

In the face of the tyranny of aggression, we shall for ever raise the torch of justice.

In the face of the violation of our homeland, we shall for ever seek international legitimacy.

In the face of aggression and killing, we shall for ever uphold our firm belief in life and in the individual.

Lebanon shall never die. Lebanon shall for ever raise the banner of justice and peace.

The President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Lebanese Republic for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Elias Hraoui, President of the Lebanese Republic, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Mr. Yaacobi (Israel): Today in Israel is Yom Hazikaron, our day of memorial for those in the Israel Defense Forces who have fallen while defending the State of Israel as well as for Israelis killed over the years by murderous terrorist attacks. Today we remember our sons and daughters, our brothers and sisters, who gave their lives so that we could live ours in freedom. With tears and with undying gratitude, we cherish their memory and salute their sacrifice.

But today in Israel our pain is doubled. Once again we have been forced into a fight with those who seek our destruction as well as the derailment of the chances for peace. And once again we are forced to resort to fighting as a last option.

I ask: "Who among you would agree to the existence of an armed militia operating from within your territory, beyond the scope of your Government's authority, carrying out attacks against other States? Who among you would allow your citizens to be attacked and killed by terrorists? Who among you would choose not to exercise the right of self-defence?"

Since 1 February this year, Hezbollah Islamic fundamentalist terrorists have stepped up their attacks against Israel, firing wave after wave of Katyusha rockets from their bases in Lebanon at towns and villages in northern Israel. They have unilaterally breached the agreements brokered by the United States in 1993.

Israel's primary obligation is to protect the security of its citizens. Security must be ensured in order to enhance the peace process. This right of self-defence is basic and elementary. We will not allow our civilian population centres to be held hostage by Hezbollah. I listened very carefully to the address made by the President of Lebanon, but, unfortunately, the Lebanese Government has neither the ability nor the will to control Hezbollah activities. Therefore, unfortunately, Israel must do it alone.

Our objective is to restore a sense of security to all our citizens. Israelis living in the north must be free of the threat of shelling and free from tension and fear. This is our duty and we will fulfil it. We are not ready again to be the victims that were mentioned by the President of Lebanon just a few minutes ago.

Thus, after a long period of restraint and the exhaustion of all political and diplomatic means, the Israel Defense Forces began hitting back at Hezbollah strongholds throughout Lebanon, intentionally avoiding sending ground troops. The goal of this operation is simple: to create a situation where the Hezbollah will not be in a position to renew its terrorist attacks against northern Israel.

The Government of Israel does not need to prove its desire for peace with its neighbours. Our activities in Lebanon do not contradict our pursuit of peace. On the contrary, they were undertaken in order to save the peace from the hands of those who vow to destroy it. As the Prime Minister of Israel, Shimon Peres, has stated, "This is not an operation of choice, but rather one of no alternative."

Israel has no territorial claim on Lebanon. And we have no intention to enter into battles with either the Syrian or the Lebanese armies. But we have the right and obligation to defend our people.

The Lebanese Government was told time and again: "Control the Hezbollah. If you are, as you claim, the sovereign Government of Lebanon, then this is your obligation." It is deplorable that the Lebanese Government disarmed all the militias which had operated

within its territory, but never Hezbollah, which is supported by a very forceful Power beyond Lebanon.

The Syrian Government was told time and again: "You control a large part of Lebanon. Use your influence to stop the terrorists."

I would like to read from an article by Daniel Pipes on this matter, which appeared in today's edition of *The New York Times*:

> "Mr. Assad provides considerable aid and has the clout to veto a planned attack on Israel or give it his blessing. He does control Hezbollah, the guerrilla group that has launched the rockets against Israel. It is based in Lebanon, which Mr. Assad has effectively ruled since 1990."

Israel waited for the Governments of Syria and Lebanon to respond, and gave ample time for diplomatic efforts, but to no avail. The Government of Israel was criticized for its restraint while Hezbollah continued to carry out attacks against Israeli civilians with impunity. The time has come to take action ourselves.

Israel's intention has never been, nor will it ever be, to hurt innocent civilians or hit peaceful civilian areas. Operations in Lebanon are being conducted solely against Hezbollah terrorist targets. Unfortunately, Hezbollah's intentions are precisely the opposite. Hezbollah situated its positions in the midst of civilian population centres throughout Lebanon. As a result of its cynical use of Lebanese villages and civilians as bases and shields for its terrorist activities against Israel, innocent Lebanese have been hurt.

Hezbollah is using the same tactics with the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) units, firing Katyusha rockets from positions close to UNIFIL bases. We deeply deplore the loss of life of innocent people who perished in these hostile activities and who were unrelated to those fanatic terrorists. But, as indicated by the spokesman of the United Nations, last week's tragedy in Qana was caused because the Hezbollah launched Katyusha rockets at Israel from locations a short distance away from the United Nations position, where innocent civilians had taken shelter.

The continued suffering of the people of Lebanon is entirely the responsibility of terrorist organizations, — first and foremost the Hezbollah. We send our sincere condolences to the families, and our hopes and wishes for a quick recovery to the wounded civilians and UNIFIL soldiers.

Over the last week, Hezbollah launched over 520 Katyusha rockets at civilian centres in northern Israel. Fifty-five people have been injured and over 12,000 have been forced out of their homes. Many are still living in shelters. The Hezbollah Katyusha attacks, like the attacks by Hamas suicide bombers, are designed not only to kill people and to inflict terror, but to destroy the Middle East peace process.

Today, there are two trends emerging in the Middle East: one which seeks a peaceful resolution to the conflict, and another, inspired and supported by Iran, which is trying to kill the prospects for peace. A minority of radicals attempts to impose its will on the majority, on the coalition for peace. A minority of terror — in Lebanon, in Egypt, in Gaza and in the West Bank — attempts to prevent peace and security, mutual respect and tolerance.

While peacemakers meet and sign treaties and create a new reality, the Hezbollah, the Hamas, the Islamic Jihah and their Iranian master seek to pull us back to the old Middle East, where violence and bloodshed were the order of the day.

Make no mistake. The stated goal of the Hezbollah is not the removal of Israeli forces from southern Lebanon, but the outright destruction of Israel. Last month, Hezbollah Vice-Chairman Nasseem Kassem stated:

> "We oppose and will continue to oppose the Zionist entity ... Israel has no reason to exist and will not exist."

Hezbollah annually receives $70 million in financial aid from Iran. Hezbollah terrorists are trained in Iranian military installations, and so-called Iranian Revolutionary Guards are stationed in Lebanon.

I wish to inform all those present that the sinister intentions of the Hezbollah go beyond Israel. It wishes to dismantle the Lebanese State and replace it with an Islamic one based on the Iranian model. Hezbollah counts the Government of Lebanon, the United States, peace-seeking Arab Governments and above all, Israel, as its avowed enemies. The means it employs to reach its unholy ends are jihad and suicidal murder. We must all

band together to defeat this scourge, which threatens our hope for a better future.

Israel welcomes the political efforts designed to restore stability to the region, to return a sense of normalcy to northern Israel and to Lebanon and to help advance the peace process. We have complete faith in the efforts and expertise of the United States Government to return calm to the region and in the goodwill of other countries as well. We are ready to agree to a cease-fire if the other party is ready to agree to a permanent cease-fire as well, immediately.

Israel is willing to accept Security Council resolution 425 (1978) only within the framework of an overall peace settlement.

Allow me to quote from the address of Prime Minister Peres to Israel's Knesset — the Israeli Parliament — two days ago:

> "I again call on the Lebanese Government to conduct negotiations for a peace treaty with Israel, which will be based on its territorial integrity, on its full sovereignty over all parts of its country, on rooting out any armed terrorist presence from its land, and on arrangements which will insure security and peace on both sides of the border ...
>
> "Peace between Israel and Lebanon is natural and essential, and is possible without any difficulty, if and when Lebanon again becomes a truly free and sovereign State. There is no real conflict between our two nations."

This, we hope, will put an end to the situation that forced Israel to retaliate and to use its right of self-defence against those who attacked innocent civilians — men, women and children — in many villages and towns throughout northern Israel.

This is necessary to clear the way for the resumption of the peace process in the Middle East.

I believe that this is the hope and obligation of the majority of nations gathered here today.

It is incumbent on this body to adopt resolutions that will help, not hinder, the peace process and the peace-seeking peoples of the Middle East.

Mr. Samhan (United Arab Emirates) (*interpretation from Arabic*): It is my honour, on behalf of the United Arab Emirates, and as Chairman of the Arab Group for this month, to extend to you, Mr. President, our thanks and appreciation for holding this special meeting during the fiftieth session of the General Assembly.

The convening of this meeting is ample evidence of the rejection by the international community of the continued Israeli aggression against the Republic of Lebanon. This aggression, which threatens regional and international peace and security, and undermines the current peace process in the area, is, by any definition, a violation of the simplest and most basic rules of international law, the Charter of the United Nations, relevant international resolutions, human rights, and particularly Security Council resolution 425 (1978).

Our disappointment and that of the international community is compounded by the intransigence shown by the Israeli Government and its escalating aggression: its continued shelling, by air, sea and land of brotherly Lebanon, resulting in the killing and displacement of hundreds of thousands of innocent civilians and the continued destruction of development institutions, housing areas, power and water stations, and historic, cultural and archaeological sites.

This aggression, which has not spared the main highways and routes leading to cities and villages in the south, is also being committed against food and relief convoys and against certain United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) sites in Lebanon, which led to the killing of some Blue Helmets, in spite of the appeals and diplomatic efforts made at all levels. This occurred in spite of the most recent Security Council resolution, which Israel has ignored, as it has done all other resolutions.

This aggressive behaviour is not in consonance with the requirements of the situation and the direction currently being taken by the countries of the region, which call for solving disputes on the basis of the Charter of the United Nations and international law in order to achieve a just and lasting peace.

The Assembly has heard a statement by His Excellency the President of Lebanon, Mr. Elias Hraoui, who spoke in detail of the Israeli aggression against his country, of the destruction wrought and of the killing and displacement of thousands of innocent civilians, in spite of all the diplomatic efforts to stop the

aggression. This compounds the concern felt by my country and other Arab and friendly countries over Israel's aggression, defiance and continued attacks, as regards not only Lebanon and its people, but all the countries and peoples of the area and the international community as a whole.

The present conduct of the Israeli Government in launching an all-out aggressive war against Lebanon, a Member State of this Organization, under the pretext of protecting its security, requires that the international community work to force the Israeli Government to comply with the resolutions of international legality and their provisions, particularly Security Council resolution 425 (1978), which calls upon Israel to withdraw its forces from all Lebanese territory and to respect the territorial integrity, sovereignty and political independence of Lebanon within its internationally recognized boundaries.

This situation could fuel the fire of extremism and violence in the area and throughout the world. It could threaten the peace process, which is only four years old. The Israeli Government, during these years, has adopted a policy of prevarication and stalling, ignoring its international and regional commitments *vis-à-vis* these negotiations. It tried to impose unfair conditions, which led to blocking the Lebanese track of the negotiations, because it wanted only to continue occupying the Lebanese and other Arab territories.

The question of security is a fair and genuine concern of all countries, particularly in view of Israeli's threats and the criminal acts it has committed. This should become one of the priorities of the United Nations, particularly the Security Council, which is charged with the maintenance of international peace and security.

The countries of the international community are called upon to shoulder their full responsibility to deter Israel's aggression against Lebanon by adopting resolutions condemning it and by taking immediate measures to stop it, to end the Israeli occupation of Lebanese territory and to force the Israeli Government to make restitution for the destruction caused by its aggression against the economic and social development structures of Lebanon. The international community is called upon also to condemn the inhuman acts and the butchery committed by the Israeli occupying Power, which has claimed the lives of dozens of innocent civilians — women, children and the elderly.

Israel, as the occupying Power, must act on, and fully respect, the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949 and implement its provisions, as well as those of the relevant resolutions of the Security Council, particularly resolution 425 (1978). Israel must immediately and unconditionally withdraw its military forces from Lebanese territory. This would be in accord with the new international trend to contain and lessen tensions and to bolster the peace process in the Middle East, which cannot be comprehensive or just in view of this haemorrhage — the killing of innocent civilians and the displacement of more than 500,000 Lebanese, under the pretext of securing the borders of Israel and quelling the Lebanese resistance.

Lebanon has a right to resist and to extend its sovereignty to all areas of its territory, including its south, which has been occupied for three decades. This right is enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations and resolutions of international significance, particularly Security Council resolution 425 (1978).

It is time for Israel to realize that Lebanese resistance will not stop until Israel completely withdraws from the occupied Lebanese territories, implements the provisions of all the relevant resolutions and returns to negotiations as the only way to settle the Lebanese question.

The recent events in Lebanon have proved that resorting to force and aggression and violating the rights of others cannot lead to a solution of disputes or guarantee the security and stability of our region.

In conclusion, I would like to reaffirm the complete solidarity of the Arab peoples and countries with brotherly Lebanon in its struggle. Lebanon stood up courageously to the aggression and criminal acts of Israel, which targeted its development and socio-economic structures. We appeal to all countries, development organizations and international financial institutions to extend urgently every possible assistance — particularly humanitarian assistance — to help Lebanon heal its wounds.

Mr. Allagany (Saudi Arabia) (*interpretation from Arabic*): Today the General Assembly is resuming its fiftieth session, for the second time, to consider the agenda item entitled "The situation in the Middle East". During this session we have celebrated the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations, an Organization which enshrines the hopes of the international community and the principles and foundations on which this Organization is based.

This session has been resumed at the request of the sister Lebanese Republic. We have just heard a statement by its President, His Excellency Mr. Elias Hraoui, who has described the tragedy of Lebanon following the shameful aggression by Israel.

I would like first to express the admiration of the people and Government of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia for the Lebanese people's resistance.

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia welcomed the Lebanese during the Taif Agreement negotiations. Now Saudi Arabia considers that Lebanon's current trial has proved the resolute attitude of its Government and the solidarity of its people. In fact, the strength of the Government of Lebanon and the solidarity its people have enabled them to rise to the Israeli challenge.

On the fifth day of a second week the Israeli military operation "Grapes of Wrath" continues in Lebanon. Day after day it is taking an increasing toll of victims among women, children and innocent civilians, and even among the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL). The Israeli war machine continues to use every military method: artillery, shelling and air raids. Yesterday 240-millimetre mortars exploded in 26 Lebanese villages.

With the death of Mohammed Dib, a four-year-old child, at a hospital in southern Lebanon, the number of those killed in the Qana massacre has risen to 102 innocent victims. We are amazed that such a frightful massacre should have taken place in a village such as Qana, which, in addition to being the base of the Fijian battalion under the United Nations flag, was a place where women, children and elderly persons had taken refuge. In just a few seconds Israeli shells turned that village into a furnace comparable to the Nazi crematoria of the Second World War. The victims fell to what was euphemistically described as a surgical strike.

Before the eyes of the international community, the broken heads of children rolled on the ground. We all saw on our television screens hospital doctors referring to "Child A", "Child B", "Child C" or "The child from the helicopter", because the children had lost their families. Victims were brought to the hospitals severely wounded, and many died as a result of their injuries. When Hassan El Abid returns to Lebanon after performing Hajj, no member of his family will be there to welcome him. An Israeli strike demolished his house, killing the mother of his children and seven of his nine children, including a newborn only four days old. Whole families perished under their collapsing homes in fractions of a second; Hassan El Abid's family was among the hundreds of victims of the aggression.

Forty shells per second are falling on Lebanese villages. The Israeli military command continues to threaten the inhabitants of southern villages, telling them to evacuate. The warning issued to them states:

> "All persons still in these villages should leave them immediately because the Israeli army is going to resume the intensive shelling of these areas. All persons who decide to stay put their lives at risk."

In less than two weeks more than 31,000 missiles and shells have been fired at Lebanon. On average 2,000 air raids per day have been carried out, aimed at destroying the Lebanese infrastructure; 80 per cent of electrical power stations have been destroyed. It had cost Lebanon millions of dollars to rebuild them after the civil war. Repairing them will take two full years. Preliminary estimates indicate that the cost will be about $300 million.

The naval blockade continues off the coast of Lebanon, and Israeli ships continue to bombard the coast, cutting off the south from Beirut and preventing the distribution of emergency humanitarian assistance and supplies to the victims in the south. This blockade has affected all Lebanese without exception; they are all suffering from grave hardships — grave shortages of basic foodstuffs and other supplies.

The international community remains silent when faced with these crimes committed on Lebanese soil. I was shocked to hear the comment of one Western journalist on television regarding this massacre: "If what happened in Lebanon had happened in a Western country, we would have called it 'ethnic cleansing'". These words are corroborated by a member of the Fijian battalion of UNIFIL, who said: "What I saw today is similar to what I saw in Bosnia and Herzegovina".

Saudi Arabia believes that constant pressure is being put on Lebanon by naval and air bombardments. Enormous damage has been caused and many innocent civilian lives have been lost. I can only express the concern of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia over the air raids, because they constitute a violation of Lebanon's sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence, and defy international law as expressed in Security Council

resolution 425 (1978), which demands that Israel unconditionally withdraw from Lebanese territory.

Saudi Arabia considers that these raids can only lead to further tension and violence in the region at a time when we are hoping that a just, lasting and global peace can spread throughout the region. Saudi Arabia wishes to reaffirm its support for Lebanon in defending its territory and protecting the security and safety of its citizens. Lebanon cannot be held responsible for what is happening in the south. I specifically refer to resistance to Israeli occupation in that region until the Lebanese army is allowed to extend its authority in that part of the country so that Lebanon can exercise sovereignty over all its territory.

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has supported the peace process since it began in 1991 in Madrid. We have encouraged the bilateral negotiations between the Arabs and Israelis. We have also, through various delegations, participated in the committee that emerged from the multilateral discussions. This meaningful participation by Saudi Arabia is evidence of our commitment to the attainment of just and lasting peace in the region. But what is happening today in Lebanon makes us question the sincerity, and even the intentions, of the Israeli authorities as regards the peace process. What peace can be built on the bodies of Lebanese children?

His Excellency the President of the Lebanese Republic stated a few days ago that all of Lebanon was against a peace achieved through bloodshed. We feel that anyone with a conscience is against a peace achieved through bloodshed. The damage done to the Lebanese infrastructure by Israel in order to slow down its process of reconstruction creates an extremely grave situation. It is Israel which is placing pitfalls in the way of peace. I am talking not only about the Lebanese-Syrian talks, but also about the occupied territories.

This is against the spirit and the letter of the peace agreements. Crimes against innocent Lebanese civilians — women and children — are a challenge to civilization, international law and morality. We are waiting today for the sponsors of the peace conference to put pressure on Israel to pledge to place no more obstacles in the way of peace, to implement Security Council resolution 425 (1978) and withdraw unconditionally from southern Lebanon as a step towards a just and lasting peace.

The Almighty said in his Koran:

"On that account: we ordained

For the Children of israel

That if any one slew

A person — unless it be

For murder or for spreading

Mischief in the land —

It would be as if

He slew the whole people:

And if any one saved a life,

It would be as if he saved

The life of the whole people." *(The Holy Koran, V:35)*

Mr. Muntasser (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) (*interpretation from Arabic*): Once again the world is witnessing a horrible massacre being committed by the Israeli aggressors against the Lebanese people. The Israeli navy has imposed a tight blockade against the port of Beirut, while its artillery and air force have been shelling and bombing Lebanese towns and villages, killing hundreds, injuring thousands and displacing more than half a million persons. The aggression, in which they have used various elements of their military machine, has caused grave material losses. This is not only an aggression reflecting deep hatred and brutality, but also another example of the terrorist acts that the Israelis have been perpetrating throughout half a century against both the Palestinian and Lebanese peoples.

The Israelis have claimed that their military operations against Lebanon are carried out in self-defence. This claim is just as false as that of the Israeli media in covering up the terrorist acts with flimsy pretexts, such as the pursuit of Hezbollah elements. The Israelis' acts themselves reveal the falsehood of their claims and prove that the objective of these criminal military operations was decided in advance: to destroy Lebanon, put an end to patriotic resistance and terrorize the people and Government of Lebanon.

If that is not the true objective of the Israeli aggression, why were shells aimed in such a manner as to result in the dismemberment of babies, women and the elderly everywhere? Are these vulnerable people among

the elements of Hezbollah? Is that why they are being assassinated in this horrendous manner? Have farms, food factories and power stations suddenly become Hezbollah bases, to be destroyed? How can the shelling of ambulances carrying pregnant women and injured children be interpreted? Have the refugees who sought shelter in United Nations camps suddenly become members of Hezbollah, to be pursued by Israeli bombs in a massacre reminiscent of the crimes of the Israeli terrorists at the Bahr el Baqar school, Sabra and Shattila and the massacre at the Al-Ibrahimi mosque?

The Israeli clique has violated Lebanon's sovereignty, and by its actions is threatening Lebanon's unity and territorial integrity. Moreover, the acts of violence and revenge which characterize the conduct of the Israeli military constitute a threat to international security.

Regrettably, the Security Council, which is supposed to be the main body responsible for maintaining international peace and security, has been remiss in addressing the deteriorating situation. When it was finally forced to intervene, it was exposed. Instead of assuming its responsibilities under Chapter VII of the Charter and adopting a resolution condemning the aggression and forcing the aggressor to bear the consequences of its actions, it had to retreat under the pressures and manoeuvres of one permanent member and adopt a weak and unjust resolution equating the criminal with the victim and those who were defending their homes with those who demolished these homes.

Security Council resolution 1052 (1996) contains specific measures for the Israelis to implement, including a cease-fire. However, events that have taken place in the region since the adoption of this resolution clearly show that the Israelis have flouted it as usual, pursuing their terrorism by demolishing houses and killing their residents, arresting hundreds of people and persisting in their blockade of towns and villages. They have even expanded and escalated their aggression. There is no doubt that the Israelis will not implement the demands of the Security Council, encouraged in their intransigence and bullying by the limitless support they receive from a permanent member of the Security Council, a member which does not limit its support to providing them with the most destructive weapons, but also protects them against any condemnation of their aggression or punishment for the perpetuation of their occupation.

This shows the extent of that country's use of double standards. At a time when it has been showing keen interest in the implementation of Security Council resolutions that address other matters with extreme cruelty, including the imposition of cruel sanctions under Chapter VII, it has been preventing the Council from condemning the most vicious and barbaric crimes, such as that perpetrated against the Qana camp. It views such crimes as undeserving of condemnation, since the perpetrators are the Israelis whom it defends and protects. It justifies their crimes even when they include the crushing of children's skulls or the dismemberment of old men under the eyes and within hailing distance of a United Nations encampment.

As I stand before the Assembly today, I am reminded of an aggression committed against my country, whose tenth anniversary falls this month. Faced with the inability of the Security Council even to condemn that barbaric American aggression, which targeted the leader of the Libyan revolution and killed his adopted daughter and several other people in Tripoli and Benghazi, the Jamahiriya h d to resort to this Assembly, which adopted resolution 41/38 condemning the United States of America for its treacherous aggression against the Libyan people and affirming the right of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya to receive appropriate compensation for the material and human losses inflicted upon it. Today, Lebanon, which is being subjected to premeditated aggression, has also had to resort to the General Assembly following the Security Council's failure to adopt a serious and decisive resolution.

The General Assembly has just heard an address by the President of Lebanon in which he reviewed events in Lebanon, including the murder and displacement of its people and the destruction inflicted upon its infrastructure. What sisterly Lebanon has been subjected to is a brutal aggression and a threat to peace and security, not only in Lebanon but in the Middle East as a whole. To avert any further adverse effects of the prevailing situation, this Assembly, which represents the true will of the international community, is called upon to condemn the aggressor and make it bear the consequences of its aggression, including compensation to Lebanon for all the human and material losses it has suffered. This Assembly is also called upon to put an end to Israel's occupation of southern Lebanon, occupation that has been rejected by the entire world and is the subject of Security Council resolution 425 (1978).

In the face of the Security Council's silence and hesitation over taking any effective measures against the oppressive Israeli practices, this Assembly and the

international community as a whole are called upon to draw the attention of the Israelis and their ally, a permanent member of the Security Council, to this situation. They should be warned that the vicious aggression against Lebanon and the humiliating tactics used by the Israelis in dealing with the Palestinians in the occupied territories will not serve security or establish any peace, but will instead push Arabs to the brink of despair, which could lead to unpredictable consequences and dangers.

Mr. Qin Huasun (China) (*interpretation from Chinese*): I wish at the outset to welcome to the General Assembly the President of the Lebanese Republic, His Excellency Mr. Elias Hraoui, and to thank him for his important address.

The General Assembly is holding a formal meeting today to consider the situation in Lebanon, reflecting the importance and seriousness of that situation. It also shows the great concern of the international community over the question of Lebanon. We believe that this meeting is extremely important and ample evidence of the international community's hope that all hostilities will cease forthwith and that a cease-fire will be implemented in the region so that further deaths of innocent civilians can be avoided and the peace process can continue without hindrance.

In the past few days, Israel has launched large-scale military attacks against southern Lebanon that have resulted in large numbers of casualties among innocent civilians and of displaced persons and refugees. It has also led to further escalation of the situation and to rising tensions in Lebanon.

The Chinese delegation expresses its deep concern over the situation. We strongly condemn all violations of international law and of the United Nations Charter. We urge all the parties concerned to exercise restraint, cease all hostilities forthwith and establish a cease-fire so as to ease tensions and contribute to the peace and stability in the region. We believe that Lebanon's sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity within its internationally recognized boundaries should be fully respected. All relevant Security Council resolutions, including resolution 425 (1978), should be implemented.

The United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) should meet with no obstacle in carrying out its functions. The safety, security and freedom of movement of UNIFIL personnel should be guaranteed by all parties concerned.

We urge the international community, including other agencies and bodies of the United Nations system, to provide the innocent civilians of Lebanon with urgent humanitarian assistance to alleviate their suffering.

China is opposed to terrorism in all its manifestations. We believe that terrorism poses a threat not only to the safety and security of the people of the country concerned, but to the peace and security of the international community. We believe that, as with other international issues, combating terrorism is necessary if the norms of international relations and international law are to be followed, and particularly if the sovereignty, security and fundamental interests of other countries are not to be jeopardized.

We believe that the sovereignty and security of all countries in the Middle East, including Israel, should be respected and guaranteed. Terrorism should by no means be associated with Arab countries and Arab peoples. Nor should anyone, under the pretext of combating terrorism, take any indiscriminate actions incurring the suffering of innocent civilians.

Harmony and peace in the Middle East should be highly treasured by all the parties concerned. We appreciate the diplomatic efforts of all countries concerned to alleviate the situation. At the present delicate and important stage we hope that all the parties concerned will take no actions which might further aggravate the conflict or jeopardize the peace process in the Middle East. We hope that all sides will remain reasonable and encourage all positive efforts conducive to alleviating the tense situation there, efforts including dialogue, consultation and negotiation, so as to create conditions for an early, comprehensive, just and lasting peace.

Mr. Al-Ashtal (Yemen) (*interpretation from Arabic*): The General Assembly is meeting today in tragic and sad circumstances. Israeli aggression against Lebanon is continuing, without mercy, for the 13th day in a row. Despite the world conscience and the denunciation of the butchery committed by the Israeli forces in Qana, which claimed more than 100 lives and wounded more than 100 people, including innocent women, children and elderly people, Israel still continues its attacks by air, sea and land. These attacks against the economic infrastructure, power plants and reservoirs, have resulted in paralysing normal life in the south of the country and displacing hundreds of thousands of Lebanese people from their towns and villages to the capital, Beirut, and its suburbs.

In spite of all those events, the Security Council was silent for several days, behaving as if it were not much concerned. The Council, which is capable of meeting at midnight to discuss the least important issue, or of making the most crucial decisions within hours, stalled and prevaricated when Israel was using its military super-machine to inflict enormous damage on Lebanon, which was barely recovering after a long and painful period of suffering.

When the Security Council found itself obliged to act after the massacre at Qana, its decision was very weak, equating aggressor and victim, occupier and occupied. Indeed, the Security Council's request for an end to hostilities was conditional on the success of current diplomatic efforts to achieve that objective. Israeli aggression therefore continued, which is exactly why the General Assembly is meeting — to express the feelings of the international community and to adopt a just resolution that will restore some credibility and balance to this international Organization, and restore security and stability to Lebanon.

Lebanese resistance, which Israel is seeking to quell, did not come out of a vacuum. It was a direct reaction to the occupation by Israeli forces of certain Lebanese territories, and the continuation of that occupation until today. Ending Lebanese resistance activities, therefore, would require the evacuation and departure of Israeli forces from the occupied Lebanese strip. The Security Council affirmed that fact in resolution 425 (1978), which Israel still completely disregards.

Mr. Kittikhoun (Lao People's Democratic Republic), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.

The General Assembly is called up today to adopt a resolution condemning Israeli aggression and reaffirming the cease-fire and the implementation of Security Council resolution 425 (1978), which calls for the complete withdrawal of Israel from the Lebanese territories. This is the right action to take, and the right way to breathe life again into the peace process, which has almost become the victim of the blatant Israeli aggression against Lebanon.

The Republic of Yemen, while expressing its full solidarity with the Lebanese people and Government, calls upon the General Assembly to assume its responsibility, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations.

Mrs. Albright (United States of America): The United States joined the other 14 members of the Security Council last week in calling for an immediate cessation of hostilities by all parties, support for ongoing diplomatic efforts, concern for the safety and security of civilians, and humanitarian and reconstruction aid for Lebanon. The United States Government wholeheartedly supports these calls. We are driven by a deep compassion for the people on both sides of the border who have suffered the loss of loved ones, who have suffered casualties, or who have endured displacement and property loss. We are moved by the plight of the people — whether Lebanese or Israeli — caught in this tragedy. We are trying to help. The United States has pledged an emergency grant of $1 million and the provision of medical supplies and equipment until we assess what more we can do.

We are also engaged in extensive diplomatic efforts. President Clinton is resolved to help the parties try to reach an agreement to bring an end to this tragedy. At his direction, the Secretary of State and his team are in the region, intensively engaged in talks with the parties. He is trying to get a cease-fire in Lebanon and along Israel's northern border and an enduring set of understandings that will provide security to civilians on both sides of the border.

This is a time for nations around the world to renew the call for peace. It is not a time to engage in rhetoric that favours one side or the other. Such rhetoric does not advance the cause of peace. It does not bring closer the day when civilians are safe. On the contrary, it only diverts attention from the acts of terrorists who have exploited the complex situation in south Lebanon to target Israeli civilians and obstruct the peace process. If we care about security and about the ability of people in the region to live normal lives, we cannot allow these violent extremists to succeed.

We have witnessed dramatic successes in the peace process during the past five years. We must do all we can to re-establish the conditions that will facilitate further progress in negotiations toward a comprehensive peace. This Assembly should rededicate itself to that task.

If a draft resolution is introduced on this topic, I would add a word of caution. The text that I have seen in circulation does not advance the cause we all support. It is one-sided in context, fails to recognize the complexity of the situation and is likely to further exacerbate the problem. I would vote against such a draft resolution. I would have hoped that this General Assembly could have

endorsed the action of the Security Council in its adoption of resolution 1052 (1996), without embroidery. We could then stand ready with all Member States to do just that.

But should this Assembly adopt a different draft resolution, I feel it incumbent on me to point out that its consequence will be a divided house — a United Nations speaking with two voices and with no clear direction. The Charter itself envisioned such a situation and sought to avoid it with Article 12. But beyond this important point is my concern with the resulting message of division. Such a signal is all the more troubling because I know all of us share common views on the essential points: the need for an end to the violence and bloodshed and a return to the peace process.

This view should not be misinterpreted. My Government will do all it can to bring about a settlement. My Government will remain committed to the territorial integrity, sovereignty, independence and unity of Lebanon. But expressing principles does not always bring results. We must each find ways to contribute tangibly to the march of peace and to the efforts to combat terrorists who would destroy or distract it.

Mr. Fulci (Italy): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union. The following Member States, which are associated with the European Union, have expressed their intention to join in the statement: Bulgaria, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Romania and Slovakia.

The European Union is seriously concerned by the aggravation of the situation in Lebanon and northern Israel. It renews its appeal for an immediate cease-fire and, in this context, supports Security Council resolution 1052 (1996). It considers that only a political solution can bring an end to the current crisis and allow the peace process to resume its course. It considers that the populations of Israel and Lebanon must be able to live in peace and security. The European Union deeply deplores the suffering inflicted on the civilian populations of both countries, in particular the tragedy at Qana, and the loss of human lives, which continues to increase. Equally, it deeply deplores the attacks on Israel.

Current events also risk compromising the peace process and stability in the Middle East. The European Union insists that all the parties, whether directly or indirectly involved in the current conflict, should contribute to an immediate halt to hostilities and acts of violence, with the aim of allowing peace negotiations to resume.

The European Union reaffirms its support for all the parties involved in peace negotiations. It confirms its willingness to contribute actively to the search in progress for an immediate halt to hostilities and a lasting peace in the region. In this regard, it supports the actions taken by the Presidency, the Troika and member States, notably France, which have been in the region or have made representations in recent days. It supports all the efforts, notably those of the United States of America, currently being made with the same purpose. The aim of these efforts must be to obtain, with an immediate halt to hostilities and acts of violence, the elaboration of a lasting agreement between the parties which would not prejudice a global agreement between Israel and Lebanon in the context of the peace process. This agreement must contribute towards guaranteeing Israel's security and preserving Lebanon's sovereignty, in accordance with Security Council resolution 425 (1978), to which the European Union remains committed.

The European Union expresses its support for the continuing efforts of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) in extremely adverse circumstances, including serious injuries to four Fijian peace-keepers at Qana, to try to alleviate the effects of the current violence and ensure the safety of the civilian population. The European Union also reiterates its appeal to all concerned to respect the safety, security and freedom of movement of UNIFIL, so that it can effectively carry out its mandate.

Lebanon, which for some years has been courageously engaged in reconstruction, must be able to find, once again, the peace to which it, like its neighbour, has a right. The European Union will continue to provide assistance so that Lebanon can take its rightful place in the Middle East in peace and prosperity. In this regard, the European Union will pursue its support for Lebanon's reconstruction and development, particularly in the field of energy. It declares itself ready to increase significantly the substantial humanitarian contribution which it is already making, by means of national contributions, to relieve the suffering of the civilian population and in particular of the refugees in southern Lebanon.

In this context the European Union launches an appeal for free and secure circulation on the coastal road south of Beirut with the sole purpose of guaranteeing access for humanitarian assistance to the populations of Sidon, Tyre and Nabatiyet.

The European Union reaffirms its commitment to pursue diplomatic efforts in the region and expresses its willingness to participate in proposals aimed at promoting a just, lasting and comprehensive peace.

Mr. Amorim (Brazil): We listened with great attention to the address of His Excellency President Elias Hraoui — all the more so as Brazil has millions of people of Lebanese descent, as indeed we have a great number of people from all countries in the region.

Brazil has been following with grave concern the resurgence of hostilities in the Middle East, and deplores the unjustifiable suffering inflicted on innocent civilian populations and the heavy material loss incurred. My Government reiterates its support for the provisions of the Geneva Convention of 1949 on the protection of civilians during armed conflicts and profoundly regrets that efforts towards the construction of definitive peace are being thwarted by acts of violence. Brazil calls on all parties involved to renounce the use of force and to solve their differences through peaceful means.

Brazil has consistently condemned all forms of terrorism in the strongest terms. We are fully aware of the grief imposed by such acts on the Israeli population. While recognizing the right of Israel to self-defence, we believe that the legitimate exercise of this right must not degenerate into massive and indiscriminate attacks against civilian centres.

In particular, it was with deep consternation that we learned of the attack against the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) site in the Lebanese location of Qana, which resulted in a great number of casualties among the Lebanese civilian population and a number of United Nations peace-keepers from Fiji. This new outburst of violence does not correspond to the deepest feelings of the populations of the region. We are convinced that, at present, even among the mourners, there is a majority that decidedly shares the desire for peace.

We are hopeful that diplomatic efforts currently being made will restore momentum to the peace process so that a comprehensive and long-lasting solution acceptable to all parties may be reached. The establishment of peace is indispensable for the resumption of social and economic development and the well-being of all the peoples in the Middle East. Brazil adds its voice to the international call for the immediate cessation of hostilities and is prepared to contribute its efforts to the steps leading to reconciliation.

Brazil expects, moreover, that in every effort deployed towards the consolidation of peace, the right of the Lebanese people to territorial integrity and sovereignty shall be observed. We reaffirm our commitment to all relevant United Nations resolutions, particularly Security Council resolution 425 (1978), and reaffirm that the territorial integrity, sovereignty and political independence of Lebanon within its internationally recognized boundaries must be fully respected.

Mr. Buallay (Bahrain) (*interpretation from Arabic*): On behalf of my delegation, I wish to offer the President our utmost thanks for his immediate convening of this resumed session under agenda item 44 on the situation in the Middle East, at the request of Lebanon and other Arab countries.

This is the thirteenth consecutive day on which Lebanon has been subjected to Israeli aggression over almost its entire territory, involving bombs and shells from air, land and sea, and a blockade imposed by Israel against Lebanon at whim. It is well known that this is not the first time Lebanon has been subjected to an Israeli attack that far exceeds in scope and negative effects any pretext given for it. These negative effects include the collective evacuation of the population from the south to the north and the destruction of the infrastructure of the Lebanese economy supporting its people. The evacuees, expelled in waves, cowered in fear under a sky full of Israeli fighter jets swooping down upon fields and roads, meting out bombs and death. Where will these people live? Who will feed them? Whenever tranquillity is restored and they return to their homes and fields, another Israeli attack takes place, forcing them to flee to the north yet again.

One may accept the phenomenon of foreign refugees in another country, but to be a refugee in one's own country is inconceivable. That is none the less the situation of the people of southern Lebanon. No one knows how long they must remain the guests of those in the north, in the light of repeated Israeli aggressions.

And what about the Israeli maritime blockade of seaports, which prevent even the fishermen from making their living, a gift from God? How can Lebanon, the cradle of civilizations and a country of miracles, be fated to destruction and devastation? How can Israel call for a comprehensive and lasting peace in the Middle East while it bombs and shells Lebanon, violates its sovereignty and territorial integrity and threatens its stability?

Even a camp of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) was not safe from Israel's bombs. That attack was a violation of all international laws and norms and a flouting of the international community and United Nations resolutions. How can there be a comprehensive peace when one of its tracks is not only blocked but diverted to the wrong direction?

My country has supported the peace process in the Middle East since it began in Madrid. We have lent all our support to the establishment of a lasting, fair and comprehensive peace and the building of mutual trust between Arab countries and Israel. The Arab world and the international community, however, are surprised by the Israeli aggression against Lebanon, which continues despite the Security Council's appeal in its resolution 1052 (1996) that all hostilities cease forthwith. In addition to its destructive effects in Lebanon and on its population, this aggression undoubtedly hinders and even stops the peace process on the Lebanese and Syrian tracks.

My delegation calls on the United Nations to stand against this aggression against Lebanon, a United Nations Member State, through the implementation of Security Council resolution 1052 (1996) and of all relevant Security Council resolutions, particularly 425 (1978), which calls for Israel's unconditional withdrawal from the occupied Lebanese territories. My delegation also calls upon all members of the General Assembly to adopt at this resumed session a resolution condemning Israel's aggression; calling for an immediate halt to its military operations; reaffirming the rights of Lebanon, whose sovereignty and territorial integrity have been violated; and calling for compensation so that it can rebuild its infrastructure if it is not to face a severe economic crisis.

The State of Bahrain reaffirms its condemnation of the Israeli aggression against Lebanon, as expressed by its Council of Ministers in a meeting this week. This aggression is a violation of Lebanon's sovereignty and of all international norms and laws, and it obstructs the peace process in the Middle East. The Council of Ministers also called for the implementation of Security Council resolution 425 (1978), which calls for Israel's unconditional withdrawal from Lebanese territory.

The meeting rose at 6 p.m.